

JULY 1987

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

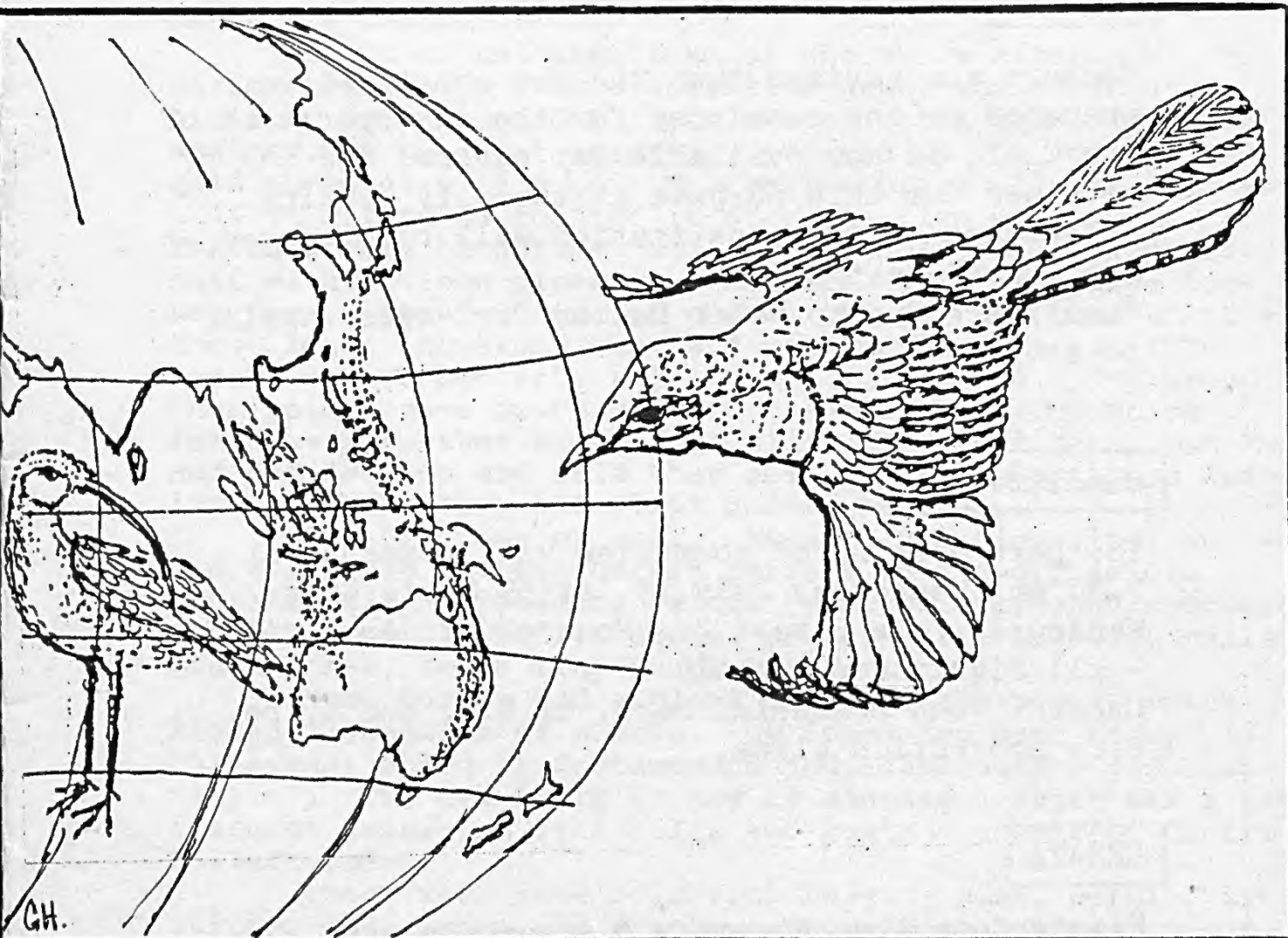
EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting : July 3. Dr. S. Garnett - "Migration Studies in
Torres Strait".

Meeting : August 7. Mr. K. Twyford - "The Platypus".

Excursion : Fungi - Mrs. F. Chuk
NB SATURDAY - (HALF DAY)

Excursion : Skipton-Mooramong, and Platypus search.
(HALF DAY)



President : Miss H BURGESS 312210
Secretary : Mr B DOWLING 432425
Treasurer : Mr W WHITESIDE 413544
Editors : Mr G BINNS 332282
Mr I FINK 052 861310

Meetings as specified are held at the School
of Mines and Industries, Lydlard Street Sth.,
Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m.
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE
FROM CROCKERS, cnr. STURT AND ARM-
STRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for
FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for

For Your Diary ----

WVFNCA Camp Out - August 28 - 30

Little Desert Area. Accommodation - Motel type units available, powered sites, camping nearby.

Book directly with the Little Desert Lodge, WINIAM:
Phone : 053 915232 or 911714: Details of costs and arrangements are available from Secretary Barry.

Angair Wildflower and Art Craft Display - Sept 26, 27
Anglesea Hall, McMillan St. 10am - 5.30pm

INCORPORATION

Members are advised that the new constitution, prepared by the committee for the incorporation of the Club, is now available for perusal and may be obtained for this purpose at the July meeting. Acceptance of the constitution will be proposed at the August meeting..
Thanks are due to Peter Dalman for expert typing of the document.

Committee Meeting

The next meeting of committee will commence at 7.30 pm, Wednesday July 19, at 55 Marie Cres. Wendouree (via Forest St, Hancock St, to Marie Cres. - all right hand turns!)
Guest - John McDonald, Dept. of C.F. and L. re. Fire protection plans.

ERRATA

Please note that November 8 excursion will be a full day event, not half-day as indicated on syllabus card.

We were extremely lucky with the weather we had for this excursion. The sun was shining brightly when we arrived at the old 92 mile post, and turned off into the block of land just out of Linton .

Once everyone arrived, it was out with the shovels and hoes, and "all hands on deck" to clear the thistles. We worked throughout the block, digging up their roots and burning the dead, dry Scotch thistles, so they could not drop seeds. There were not as many as last time, so our work two years ago must have been effective. In fact they were rather hard to find. Also we didn't see any freshly used rabbit burrows and only saw two rabbits.

We were delighted to see a group of about fifty kangaroos, hopping across the back of the block while everyone was working. They looked fairly large and healthy. It was good to see them bounding so fast and gracefully.

All the "grownups" went and had afternoon tea while we kept the fire going, even after all the thistles were well and truly dead.

Now comes the highlight of the whole afternoon! Mr. Barlow brought us over a witchetty grub, and asked us, Allison, Heather, and I if we'd ever eaten them. We hadn't! Heather, to my great surprise, plucked up the courage and said she'd give it a go. Mr. Barlow broke off its head to kill it before he toasted it over the fire on a stick. Taking it off he offered half to Heather, and chewed his half with obvious pleasure. Heather, with a strange look on her face, popped it in and chewed it up. The thought of all those legs! However, she said it was O.K. . A bit like "burnt peanut butter", and she's still living. The group then split, some going back to the cars and some going on for a walk further around the block. We went back, but Mum and Dad went on and said they saw where the kangaroos were living; where they had slept under the trees.

At this time of year, not much was flowering, but we did see these things: *Correa reflexa* in flower, *Acacia genistifolia* - Spreading wattle (particularly good specimens flowering really well), small, pretty white daisies, called *Brachycomes*, and a tiny purple *Wahlenbergia*.

Mrs. Murphy had a plant list for the block, which listed 12 species of *Acacia*. We found two more today- *A. baileyana*, which is *Cootamundra* and *A. acinacea* (Gold Dust wattle). The new tally is now 14 species. There was a big stand of *Casuarina littoralis* and quite a number of Cherry ballart trees.

There were some colourful fungi - pink, purple, tiny yellow, red, brown and orange. There were not many birds, but we saw a dead magpie, which Mr. Binns said he thought had probably been killed by a fox. He also saw a white-eared honeyeater, and heard a tree creeper. We all heard Kookaburras; at least I can identify their call!

Cont'd

It was a great day, and even though we were working, we did have a chance to walk around the block and really enjoy being out in the bush.

By Melinda Dalman.

Mr. Barlow brought over a wicketty grub and said "try one" so I was game enough and shared one with Mr. Barlow. He cooked it in the fire. It was O.K. It tasted like burnt peanut butter.

By Heather Dalman.

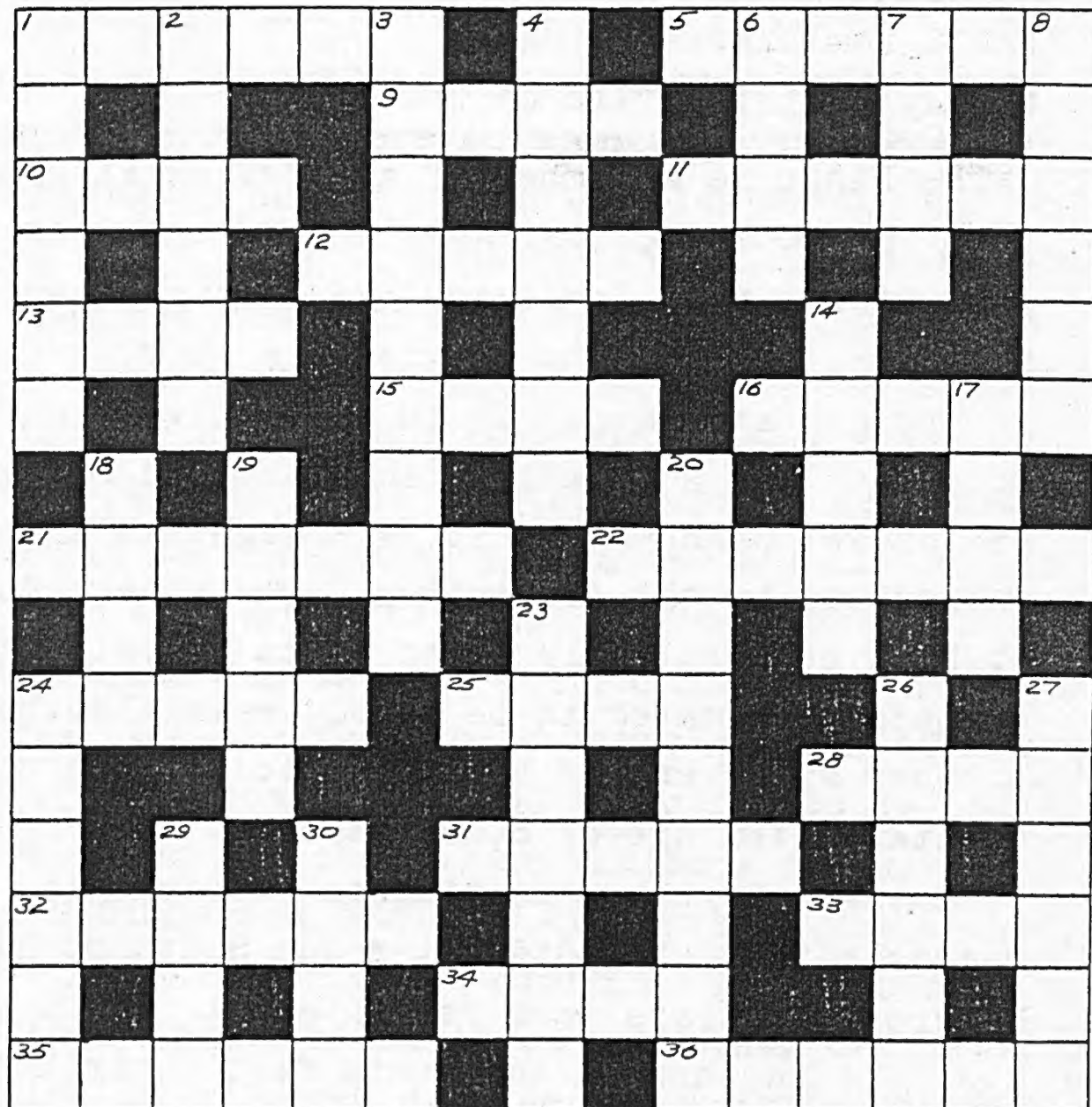
Heather and me climbed an old mound near what used to be a miners puddling machine. We saw lots of kangaroos. We made a mia-mia with sticks.

By Allison Dalman.

NATURAL HISTORY CROSSWORD by Tantalus

ACROSS

- 1 Member of Fam. Procellariidae (6) 5 Muscle ending (6) 9 Egg (4)
10 One fruit tree mould resembles this (4) 11 --- Hawk Moth (6)
12 Noisy or rainbow? (5) 13 Inner bone of forearm (4)
15 Malacorhynchus membracus has pink ones (4) 16 In which bees
deposit honey (5) 21 Pores in leaves (7) 22 Slender cypress pine
Callitris preissii was C.---- (7) 24 Tall woody plants (5)
25 Black and white (4) 28 Blue pointer (4) 31 Penguin, owl or
prion? (5) 32 Common estuary fish (6) 33 S--- is often found at
the water's --- (4) 34 Canine tooth (4) 35 Sucker fish (6)
36 Fam. of lizards (6) (Common name)



DOWN

1 Pygmy, ringtail or gliding? (6) 2 --- or mountain devil (6)
 3 Fam. Loriidae (9) 4 The male one is probably the world's
 heaviest flying bird (7) 6 Common wallaroo (4) 7 Pigeon (4)
 8 E. --- Shining gum (6) 14 This bird is known as the Christbird
 (5) 17 Order Chiroptera (4) 18 The ---fish and brittle--- are
 closely related (4) 19 Fossil resin (5) 20 Amphibians (Rana
 daemeli) (4,5) 23 Green grocers or double drummers? (7)
 24 ---- or Kangaroo Island wallaby (6) 26 Dewfish (Fam. Plotos-
 idae) (6) 27 Fam. Xylorictidae (6) 29 This bivalve could be a
 giant! (4) 30 The koala is not one (4)

Happy puzzling. Answers in next issue.

CANIS familiaris (dingo).

Mr Ray Draper's Talk on The Dingo.

The Dingo is a member of an equatorial group of dogs(New Guinea, S.E. Asia and Northern Africa) that differ from domestic dogs, among other features, in breeding only once a year, c/f twice in the domestic dog. It is a relatively new member of the Australian fauna and its origins are as yet unknown but it is thought to have been introduced by the Aborigines. The oldest fossil to have been reliably dated is an almost complete skeleton estimated to be 3,000 years old, but another specimen has been allotted a less strongly substantiated age of 8,000 years.

Because there are no dingoes in Tasmania, this suggests that they did not reach Southern Australia before the straits were formed about 14,000 years ago. It is thought that this fact contributed to the survival of the Thylacine and Sarcophilus.

Wild populations in S.E. Australia include a high proportion of hybrids but hybridisation is less in Central Australia. The last stronghold of the sub species in Eastern Australia is in the forests between the dividing range and the coast.

The Dingo lives in a stable territory of about 100 square Km but this varies in winter. They live mostly on the forest edge where prey is plentiful.

It is an opportunistic predator with mammals making about 60% of its diet, birds, reptiles insects and soft fruit the remainder.

The Dingo is a social animal, living in families and hunting together, particularly in the case of large prey. The previous years family help in the bringing up of the current litter which can be from one to eight, three or four being the norm.

They are prone to all the diseases and parasites of domestic dogs.

Old burrows, hollow logs or caves are the preferred den sites and young can be seen outside the den at about nine days after birth. At six months they are efficient hunters. The area around the den is used for hunting only by the young, the adults going further afield. The cry is a howl, sometimes used in mating calls and very often for the joy of making a noise.

The Dingo and domestic dogs are of the same species and interbreed freely. Their status throughout Australia is common; they can be typically coloured a ginger with white points, to almost a creamy white, with a few black with tan points.

Mr Draper was suitably thanked by Ken McDonnell for his talk and slides. It was exciting to have a pair of handsome and docile Dingo specimens in attendance for the duration of the meeting.

L.F.

GROUP 2 (All 10stamens free)

How can the five more or less common species in the genus, *Pultenaea*, near Ballarat, be distinguished ?

Refer to the News Sheet for May for a key to the five genera in Group 2 found near Ballarat.

KEY :-

Most leaves alternate

Leaf margins incurved



or flat

Flowers terminal, solitary, bracteoles large, scarious (almost = membranous) nearly as long as calyx. Leaves about 10 mm long, narrow-lanceolate, + pungent.

P. muelleri

(Mueller's Bush-pea)

Flowers axillary, sessile, crowded at ends of branchlets. Leaves not pungent, silky-hairy on lower convex surface. Usually a low bush.

P. humilis

(Bush-pea)

Leaf margins always recurved



Flowers on pedicels longer than leaves, solitary or in pairs,. Leaves narrow-linear + 1 cm long, acuminate (pointed) and sometimes pungent. Bushes form a mat.

P. pedunculata

(Matted Bush-pea)

Flowers sessile or on pedicels shorter than leaves, usually in terminal clusters

Leaves with midrib produced beyond apex into a small glabrous mucro. Leaves glabrous or nearly so, 1.5 - 3 cm. Tall shrubs 3 -10 ft. Flowers in dense terminal clusters.

P. daphnoides

(Large-leaf Bush Pea)

Leaves never mucronate, ovate or lanceolate less than 5 mm, undersurface very concave, midrib hardly apparent. Branches often wiry and sprawling. Many flowers.

P. gunnii

(Golden Bush-pea)

h.h.